

"President Bush called rising gas prices a 'hidden tax on working people' this morning. Hidden? I think it's been pretty obvious to everyone how rising gas prices effect all of us - except maybe to the president. And now the president says he's going to help lower gas prices by waiving clean fuel requirements? So we might save a few pennies at the pump while sacrificing our health in the long run?" Farr said, responding to President Bush's order today to temporarily waive federal clean-fuel burning requirements for gasoline.

"Congress doesn't have a magic wand we can wave to lower gas prices - but we're not blind either. We've seen this energy crisis coming for years; we could have taken action. But with oil men in the White House, the Republican leadership closed their eyes and rubber-stamped bills written by the energy industry, that benefit only the energy industry. Instead of providing forward-looking policy ideas for a sound energy future, they've been content to drive America into the future by looking through the rearview mirror with its heavily weighted dependence on fossil fuels.

"Instead of more talk about investigating rising prices, the President should have taken aim at some of the estimated \$80 billion in taxpayer-funded subsidies to the energy industry. Democrats have several ideas about how to use that money to benefit American consumers. More than four months ago I cosponsored Congressman Brian Higgins' bill, H.R. 4479, which would rescind the taxpayer subsidies, tax breaks, and royalty relief given to big oil and big gas companies, and use those funds to help low-income Americans, farms, and small-businesses struggling under the weight of gas prices. Another idea in development is to reinvest the money in alternative fuel development. Unfortunately Republicans have voted again and again against rolling back the subsidies.

"The president's speech today was a pale attempt to make up for five years of inattention. After which he got back in his 14-vehicle motorcade and drove the two and a half miles back to the White House."